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Christian Youth in a Changing World

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A GROUP of youth leaders met recently to consider the forthcoming series of World Conferences at Oxford and Edinburgh in 1937, Hangchow in 1938 and the Youth Conference in Switzerland in 1939. They represented the various branches of the Christian Church in this country, including the Youth organizations of the Missionary Societies, the British Christian Council for International Friendship, Life and Work and the Student Christian Movement. It was felt that the multiplicity of conferences was confusing to young people in the churches, and that as each conference dealt with certain aspects of one central theme—the Faith, Life and Work of the Universal Church in a changing World—study outlines dealing with the whole series should be produced in co-operation for use in all Youth groups. Six members of the group collected material for the studies which was arranged and written by one of their number. These outlines are the outcome of the combined thinking of a working fellowship who were conscious as they met together of the guidance of the Spirit of God and the growing Unity of the Church which is His Body.

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I

THE WORLD AT HANGCHOW

" After these things I saw, and behold, a great multitude, which no man could number out of every nation, and of all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb . . . and saying, Salvation unto our God which sitteth on the Throne, and unto the Lamb.

" Who are they, and whence came they ?

" These are they which come out of great tribulation."

A. Hangchow.

Hangchow is the most beautiful city in China. A short way inland from Hangchow Bay, south of the great trading port of Shanghai, it stands on the shore of a lake surrounded by wooded slopes and mountains. Dotted among the trees are temples with curling eaves, and dragon-guarded doors, and slender many-storied pagodas.

" Heaven above, Hangchow below," runs the Chinese proverb, and indeed Hangchow is a home of ancient Chinese beauty and culture.

" These are they "—

To this lovely city, in September of next year (1938), will be drawn Christian men and women of nearly every country in the world :

Christians from Europe, their minds full of the troubles of unemployment and anxiety about war.

Christians from the Near East, from Moslem countries where religion and the State are counted as one, and to be a Christian may be to be cut off from the community.

Christians from Japan faced by the same difficulty—where the veneration of the Emperor may be compared with worship of the Deity.

Christians from Africa, where the old tribal society is breaking up so quickly, and young men and women are plunged into bewildering temptations in the new industrial life of mines and cities.

Christians from India, in the midst of their Nationalist struggle, trying to build a united church, and to guide and teach the great masses of people who are turning away from Hinduism because they feel that it does not offer them a fair chance.

Christians from the United States, troubled by unemployment just as Europe is troubled, and having in addition the tremendous difficulties created by the mixture of races poured into that vast " melting pot."

Chinese Christians wondering what is their duty to their country, so divided and so hard beset without and within.

All of them with trembling hopes and bitter fears, " a great multitude out of every nation," some of them, indeed, " come out of great tribulation."

Who are they ?

They are leading men and women from what we call the " younger " churches of Africa, India and the East, and from the churches of Europe and America. They stand, not for themselves only, but for the " great multitude which no man could number " of the Christian men and women of the world.

Why Are They Coming ?

Because the world is in a mess. Dictators and social reformers, scientists and statesmen, have tried in vain to put things straight, and they only seem worse than ever before. It is time the Christian Church braced herself up to take a hand.

B. The World.

SHAKEN AUTHORITY OF GENEVA
JAPAN CALLS ANTI-WAR PLANS SEDITIOUS
RUSSIA TO INCREASE HER FLEET
ATTACK ON JEWS IN ITALY

RACIAL CLASH IN RAND MINES
ALL GERMANS TO BE STATE EDUCATED:
PRIVATE SCHOOLS BAN
COMMUNISM LEADING TO PAGANISM
STRIKES IN U.S.A.

That the world is in a mess can be seen by just reading the headlines in the papers every day. These are a few which have appeared recently. Very likely you can think of a great many more.

Behind the Headlines.

The League of Nations, of which we all had such high hopes a few years ago, failed so badly in the effort to keep the peace between Italy and Abyssinia that people are asking now if it is any good at all. But after all, the League can be no better than the countries composing it, and it is they, not the League, that have failed.

Japan, a proud and vigorous country, feels that she has not had a fair deal from the Western nations. She wants an overseas empire, and she has been trying to get control of China —by open attack in the north, and by "propaganda," that is, encouraging rebellion and dissatisfaction in China itself. Japan believes that military conquest is right and proper.

Russia fears that Japan on the east and Germany on the west will try to overthrow the Soviet State which she is building up. She has a huge army, and is prepared to fight if attacked.

The terrible wave of anti-Jewish feeling which started in Germany has spread to other European countries. Even in England there is a certain amount of it.

In Africa, there is not only the problem of the African and the white man, but also that of a certain number of Indians who have settled there; also of the many European nations who hold, or used to hold, parts of that great continent as Dominions, Colonies and Mandated Territories and Protectorates. All are looking at each other with fear and suspicion.

In Italy and Germany each child is taught from the very beginning to think that *his* country, *his* State, *his* Dictator, is always right. He is not allowed to know what other countries think.

The United States of America are fighting their way through desperate labour troubles, poverty and " depression."

And we in England know only too well what we ourselves have to face, both at home and in our relations with other countries.

C. The Church—What is it Doing ?

Probably you have heard people say impatiently, " But why doesn't the Church *do* something ? " And others, in despair, say, " Christianity has failed. It can't or won't cure unemployment. It didn't prevent the last war. It didn't stop Italy from seizing Abyssinia. It won't avert the next war. So let us forget about it."

Perhaps we ourselves have got thoroughly discouraged. Perhaps we sometimes feel that our own local church is not doing very much, and that we ourselves are useless ; that the message of Christ is right and splendid, but just can't be applied to the world. Is it wicked to think like that ?

It would certainly be a disaster if our thinking stopped there. But it is just *because* a great many Christians, all over the world, have been thinking in this way, that so many people are going to Hangchow next year. For they have not been content to give up. They are quite sure that the Church of Christ is the world's one hope ; that the power of Christ is with the Church, if only we will use it ; that the Church of Christ is as wide as the world, and that all Christians must get together, talk and think and pray together, to make the Church a glorious beacon, shining before the nations and making their way plain. For it is God's world after all.

D. And You ?

But we are not leaders of the Church. We shall not go to Hangchow. We have to stay here at home and do our daily

jobs and struggle with our own worries, which are quite big enough to give us no end of trouble. What has it all got to do with us ?

But we are the Church, just as much as the great leaders. What use will it be if the wise and good men and women give up their money and their time to make that long and tiring journey ; if they spend their days and part of their nights in earnest striving to find out a way ; if they make decisions about what the Church ought to do ; what use will it be if we at home don't back them up ? How wretched for them, if they come home full of splendid plans, and find the churches in their own lands jogging along, humdrum, dull and uninterested !

We have got to get ready for Hangchow, just as much as our leaders. Little village churches in China ; " bush " churches in Africa ; struggling communities of Christians in Turkey and Iran ; in India, in Japan and the islands of the Pacific, and all over Europe and America ; and we ourselves in the towns and villages of Britain—we must all prepare. This little book is to help you to do your part.

The Leaders Want to Know What you are Thinking

When you have gone through this pamphlet and talked it over, if you feel that you have got hold of some interesting ideas, write them down. Get someone to keep notes of your meetings. Then send up your decisions and your questions to the headquarters of your particular group.[1]

In this way the leaders of the Church will know, first, that you *do* take an interest—and that will be a great encouragement to them ; second, what are your difficulties and desires ; and that will help them to help you !

[1] There are two addresses on the title-page of this booklet—to either of these you can write. Or if your group is connected with a missionary society, your correspondence should be with the Youth Secretary there.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

A. 1. A member of a missionary committee asks, " What is the point of having a world conference at Hangchow ? Is the expense justified ? " How would you answer him ?

2. Why was the Far East chosen for the conference ?

B. 1. Are there any difficulties which are common to Christians in all countries in the world ? If so, why do you think this is so ?

2. Are there any difficulties which are particular to Christians in (*a*) Europe ; (*b*) America ; (*c*) Africa ; (*d*) the countries of Asia ? Or has every country a smaller or greater share in all troubles ?

3. In our own country and in America we have what is called " free speech." In countries such as Germany, Italy, Russia and Japan people are only allowed to say and write what the State approves. Which do you think is the better way ? Are there any disadvantages in allowing people to say what they like ?

C. Why has the Christian Church appeared so helpless in the face of world troubles, although individual Christians feel so deeply about them ? Is it because :

1. Christians have not thought hard and clearly enough to make up their minds. Or :

2. Because there are such sharp differences of opinion among Christians. Or :

3. Because the Churches are not united for action. Or :

4. Because the Churches share the very ills in society which they wish to cure ?

D. Make a list of the subjects which you would like to have discussed at Hangchow, bearing in mind particularly the needs of the " younger Churches " of China, Japan, Africa and India.

II

ONE WORLD-WIDE CHURCH

A. Church Arithmetic : Long Division=Subtraction.

" We are not divided, all one body we. . ."—Popular Hymn.

" Four places of worship within a hundred yards of each other in one of the cities of India, each barely half-full at any ordinary service, each too often engaged in unceasing warfare, not against the sin and suffering all round, but against the supposed defects in the beliefs and practices of the others."—Dr. V. S. Azariah, Bishop of Dornakal, South India.

These two statements contradict each other. Which is right ? Bishop Azariah, himself an Indian, describes what is sometimes seen in India, China and Japan. Is it surprising that Indians, Chinese and Japanese, who are not satisfied with their own religions and are seeking God, are bewildered by divisions among Christians ? " If you want to be a Christian, you must join *our* Church." This is what Anglicans, Baptists, Congregationalists, Methodists, Roman Catholics, Presbyterians, all, at any rate, have said. Which of them is the Hindu or Mohammedan or Buddhist to believe ? Or is he to turn away, thinking that, where there are so many different opinions it is possible that none of them is right ? The long division has meant subtraction, the taking away of many from the Christian Faith, from Christ.

B. Denominations or Damnations ?

" It is told of a well-known Japanese Christian that, speaking in England about Christian unity, whenever he meant to refer to Denominations, he said, by a slip in his English, " Damnations." Will anyone say he was wholly wrong ? "—Canon F. R. Barry.

The leaders of missionary societies were the first to learn that divisions, if not denominations, were damnations. But the Student Christian Movement in many countries was first in finding out how useful it was to come together to plan the

best way in which the Christian message could be given in colleges and universities. Older people learnt from the younger, and in 1910 at Edinburgh those who directed the missionary societies of all denominations in Great Britain, Europe and the United States met those who were teaching and preaching Christ in Africa and the East. How can we, they asked each other, so plan our work that we may avoid confusion and the waste of overlapping when there is so much to be done ? How can we work so that our message may be more effective ? What can we learn from one another about the best ways in which we may bring Christ to the world ? So out of the Edinburgh Conference grew many national Christian Councils and the *International Missionary Council,* which now links together overseas missionary work.

Eighteen years passed, four of them years of the World War, and many more disturbed by its effects. But in 1928 a second international missionary conference met in Jerusalem. By this time there were great changes ; most notably, the " missionary " Churches in India, China, Japan, Java, Africa, had themselves become missionary Churches. (Do you see the difference which the inverted commas make ?) They now had a life of their own ; they had begun to shoulder their responsibility towards their own non-Christian fellow-countrymen. Instead of the two or three dark faces at Edinburgh, at Jerusalem there were dozens, men who were true leaders of the Church and full partners with those who had led them earlier ; side by side they prayed and planned as one in Christ ; His work was their work ; at Jerusalem—where else better ?—denominations were no longer damnations.

And so to the third international missionary conference at Hangchow in 1938.

C. " Religion is the Opium of the People."

" What good is it if a man profess to have faith and yet his actions do not correspond ? Suppose some brother or sister is ill-clad and short of daily food, and one of you says, ' I wish you well, keep yourselves warm and well-fed,' and yet you do not give them what they need ; what is the use of that ? "—St James.

" A Hindu newspaper published from time to time accounts of the slums of our great cities, and added on each occasion the refrain : ' This is what Christianity has done for England ; do you want it here ? ' "—William Temple.

Did St James think very differently from Lenin ? For if the comfortable Christian in the early Church had given opium to the poor, it would have done them as much good as the kind of religion he had ; opium would at least have made them feel less cold and hungry. Of course it all depends on what you mean by religion and faith ; for a great deal of what passes for religion is not Christ's religion at all.

About twenty-five years ago when Christian people began to have a bigger and truer idea of a world-wide Church, some of them in many countries began also to have a bigger and truer idea of what that Church ought to be doing. It ought to make it possible for nations to live together as friends. It ought to do its best so that everyone should be able to develop his life to the full, as God meant him to, in better homes, in better conditions of work. It was a big task, too big for any one Church or country ; it could only be done by the whole world-wide Church working together.

So there came into being two more movements, the result of two other conferences. In 1914 at Constance, in Germany, *The World Alliance for International Friendship through the Churches* was founded, at the very moment when war broke out. In 1925 a conference of the Churches was held at Stockholm, which led to the formation of *The Universal Christian Council for Life and Work,* which in July 1937 called the Churches to meet at Oxford to consider what message the Church must give when, to-day, Communism and an unchristian idea of the duty and power of the State are threatening, in some countries of Europe and the East, the freedom and very existence of the Church. The subject of the Oxford Conference was " The Church, the Community and the State." If you think what each of these words stands for, you will see some of the difficulties, and appreciate that clear thinking is needed.

Although the work of these two organizations finds no

place in newspaper headlines, they are doing enough to prove that the world-wide Church is waking up to do the duty to which Christ has called it from the first. The reproach that " religion is the opium of the people " can no longer be hurled at it. The Church to-day is making known that the Christian way of fellowship is the only way to world peace, that the Christian Faith makes no distinction between one man, one nation, one class and another, and that the Gospel can and must be applied to the whole life of man in the East and in the West.

D. More Church Arithmetic.

" Multiplication is vexation,
Division is as bad ;
The Rule of Three doth puzzle me,
And Fractions drive me mad."

Old School Rhyme.

" There is one body and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling ; one Lord, one Faith, one baptism ; one God and Father of all."—St Paul.

Apply the rhyme to the Church, and you cannot say that it is not true, that it is not the exact opposite to what St Paul wrote. Count up how many Churches you know, and then remember that there are many times more that you don't know. Multiplication, Division, Fractions, the rule not of three, but of hundreds : it is all very puzzling, very vexing, very maddening ; but also it is all wrong. This is what the Church is now learning, and it is trying to undo the mischief of the divisions which have weakened it for so long.

Ten years ago yet another kind of conference of the Churches was held. This time the idea came from America, and in 1927 four hundred delegates from at least thirty of the greater churches, more or less separated from each other, came together at Lausanne. They came to discuss why they were separated—that in itself was a step forward—and whether there were not many things on which they could agree. Why did some Churches have bishops ? Why were others governed by

Assemblies of their ministers and lay members? What is it necessary to believe if you are to be a Christian after Christ's pattern? Out of this Conference came the *Faith and Order Movement.*

There is more unity to-day than there was ten years ago. In South India there is one Church uniting five separate missions, and the Churches are working towards further union; in Great Britain there is one Methodist Church instead of three; in France the Protestant Churches are uniting; in Scotland there is Presbyterian union. The Church of England is now in communion with the Lutheran Church of Sweden and the Orthodox Church of Rumania. These are beginnings; the trail is blazed; it has not yet become a broad highway to the Kingdom of God. More progress will be made at Edinburgh in August 1937, when the Faith and Order Movement is holding its second conference. There four hundred Church leaders will pray and plan together once more that God's great purpose may come nearer to fulfilment, One World-Wide Church of Christ, for which He prayed, that in it all Christians might be one, that the world might know that His Father had sent Him.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

A. What is the idea of the Church in the mind of the ordinary Christian? Is it:
   1. A local congregation?
   2. A particular form of church order, *e.g.* Episcopal, Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist?
   3. The Communion of Saints, the Church Catholic (Universal), the Body of Christ?

B. 1. What is a missionary Church?
   2. Why have the League of Nations and the International Labour Office not done more for peace and order in the world and a better life for all men? What should the world-wide Church give which they cannot?

C. What has the world a right to expect from the Church at this time ?

1. Programmes for politics and social reform ?
2. General principles to guide statesmen and economists ?
3. " A God-controlled world, through God-controlled men and women ? " (Oxford Group Movement's definition.)
4. Fellowship in Christ shown within the Church's own life ?

What is the Church in a particular country to do if the State makes war on another country ?

D. How do you think the Christian Church can best fulfil St Paul's ideal of the Body of Christ ?

1. By becoming one single world-organization ?
2. By becoming a federation of self-governing churches ?
3. By a League of National Churches ?
4. By acting co-operatively on special questions ?

Do you think it would be a good idea if there were a National Christian Council in Britain as there is in China, India, Japan and part of Africa ?

What help do you think the Hangchow Conference might expect from the Conferences at Oxford and Edinburgh ?

III

WHAT THEY WILL TALK ABOUT

There are five main subjects for the thought, prayer and discussion which will take place at Hangchow. It is interesting to know what they are, though there are some parts of them that we ourselves cannot discuss usefully here in Britain.

1. *The Faith by which the Church Lives.*—That is, the world-wide Church must be clear about its central belief, or we shall only perplex those whom we wish to attract.

2. *The Witness of the Church.*—How the Church can best

make known the Good News of the Kingdom of God. There are many different ways, of course, and the Christians of the "younger Churches" will have some very interesting things to tell.

3. *The Life of the Church.*—All sorts of things come into this—ways of worship, how lay-folk can help, education, missionary work, and so on.

4. *The Church and its Environment.*—Here, too, there will be interesting contributions from Africa, China, Japan and India, whose setting is so different from our own.

5. *Co-operation.*—This discussion, of course, will be about ways in which the different Churches can work together and help each other.

It will be most useful for us, however, to keep our own discussion under only three headings:

A. What the Church Believes (The Faith).
B. What the Church is Doing (Life and Witness).
C. What the Church Must Do (Environment and Co-operation).

A. What the Church Believes.

Each branch of the Church has its own way of expressing its belief. Books have been written and sermons preached about the Christian Faith, and still we have not exhausted the glory and the wonder of it. But in the first chapter of St John's Gospel there is a passage (verses 1-14) which gives the very heart of the matter, that which makes the Christian Faith different from all other religions, wise, noble and beautiful though many of them may be. It is summed up in St John iii. 16: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish."

God loves the *world*—not only the good people.

"The Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost." That is what Jesus said about Himself.

"While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." That is what St Paul said.

There is no other faith in all the world which contains that—the loving, seeking Father God, who gave of His own Self, in Christ, for a world that was perishing.

The world without Christ *is* perishing. We can see it for ourselves. What else is all this mess and muddle, all this hate and fear and misery, but the world " perishing " because it does not " believe "—that is, accept Christ's Way as the right way, and His strength as the power that makes it possible to walk in that Way ?

The second great point in our Faith is that which we have quoted from St Paul—" Christ died for us."

Here, again, we can never get to the bottom of all the meaning of " Christ died for us." But in these troubled times we can take these thoughts out of the many—that Christ came right into this dark and sinful world, and by suffering all things, even death on the Cross, He broke the power of sin. We *can* be delivered from the evil in us, by His power. And, having been ourselves set free, we have the privilege of helping to shoulder His Cross. Because Christ suffered, because Christ died, suffering and death can become for the Christian splendid, heroic redemptive things.

The world thought it saw Christ put to a shameful death, without raising a finger to help Himself. The world thinks it sees Christians beaten and bullied, without having the " spirit " to answer back.

But the Cross of Christ was His glorious victory ; and every persecution of the Church has made it, not weaker, but stronger, purer and braver.

And, thirdly, we know that God's Holy Spirit does guide and guard His people, dwelling within us if we will give Him place.

The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit—all different showings of the One True God.

B. What the Church is Doing.

When people say to you, as we suggested in the first chapter, " But why doesn't the Church *do* something ? " you may have

been puzzled what to answer. As a matter of fact, the Church all over the world is actually doing a great deal, and you should know about it. Then you will be able to help others to a better understanding. Here are some of the outstanding things.

1. *In China.*—Some years ago the National Christian Council in China planned a "Five Year Movement" for evangelism, whose slogan was, "Lord, revive Thy Church, beginning from me." Bands of Christians went out teaching, preaching and organizing, with very fine results. Also, in a very practical way, the Christian Church in China is throwing itself into the work of helping the desperately poor people in the villages to farm their lands better, and to form co-operative societies so that, when bad years come, they can borrow money to help them through without getting hopelessly into debt.

2. *In Japan.*—That great Christian hero, Kagawa, started the "Kingdom of God" movement very much on the same lines as the Chinese "Five Year Movement." Kagawa believes in very practical Christianity. He went to live in the slums of Tokyo, and spoke and wrote in protest against them. When at last Tokyo woke up to its responsibility, it was for Kagawa that the Mayor sent to help clear them. Kagawa has also done a great deal to start co-operative societies. He feels it is far better to help people to help themselves than to give them "charity"! Japanese Christians are doing a lot to spread the Good News by articles in newspapers. Nearly everyone in Japan can read, so this brings in many enquiries.

3. *In India,* we find the "Forward Movement"—again associated with help for the very poor, the "outcastes" of the Hindu religion, who are, perhaps, worse off than any poor people in the world. In India, too, we see the "mass movements" of these outcaste Untouchables, who, knowing little of Christianity, but seeing that it is a religion of Hope, are turning to the Church and asking help and teaching. Great numbers, too, from the caste communities are crowding to the Church, longing to know more.

4. *In Africa,* where thousands of Africans are leaving their

village homes and crowding to work at the copper mines in Rhodesia, a team of missionaries from six different missionary societies has gone to work, to help the Africans to fight against drink, gambling and careless ways which were destroying them body and soul. In West, Central and South Africa are mass movements similar to those in India.

5. *In our own Country*, we remember the " World Alliance," " Life and Work " and the " Faith and Order " movements and the *International Missionary Council*, which have already done fine work. Now comes the " Recall to Religion " from the Archbishop of Canterbury at the beginning of the year. The Free Churches as well as the Church of England have responded to this, and all are seeking to interpret the spirit of Christ more clearly and to witness more wholeheartedly before the world. There are probably more young people campaigning to-day for religious and social causes than ever before. Here and now, in studying this book, we are part of the " Forward Movement " of our own land.

6. *In the United States and Canada*, too, the churches have taken up the challenge of the world's muddle, and groups are praying and studying along the same lines.

C. What the Church Must Do.

1. It must never be forgotten that the Church is the Body of Christ. Without Him in the centre, however much we may busy ourselves in trying to put things right, we shall be about as much use as a watch with the mainspring broken or a wireless set with the current switched off ! Of course, people outside the Church cannot understand this, so it is not a thing to be much talked about. Rather it has to be lived, so that God's will flows through us and shows us how to live wisely and graciously. Having, then, " put first things first," how may we expect the Church to take a hand in clearing up the mess ?

2. Christians in every land will, while loving and serving their own country, remember that they belong to a world-wide Church, and that their Father is a world-wide God, loving all nations equally. They will strive hard to be fair to other

nations, to understand their point of view, to make allowances for possible mis-representation ; they will resolutely banish thoughts of hate and revenge ; and thus they will form little centres of wholesome thought and clear-sighted courage in the midst of the madness of fear. They may—almost certainly they will—suffer sorely for it. But in so far as they keep in touch with God by worship, their influence will be strong. How strong it may become we cannot tell—it may save the world from war. When a doctor has to treat someone suffering from such a bad burn or scald that the skin will not grow over the wound, he does not take a great sheet of new skin and cover up the place. He takes tiny little bits of healthy skin and puts them on here and there, and they grow and spread by the life that is in them. This is how Christian influence works in Nature's way. Tell *that* to people who want the Church to " do something " big and sudden !

3. The Christian Church must think clearly and carefully about such questions as poverty, unemployment, bad conditions of workers, and trades that do damage in the world, such as the drink trade, opium and drugs, bad pictures at the cinema, and other things that will come into your mind.

But, because it is the Christian Church, it will be careful not to " take sides." It will not imagine that a man is right because he is rich—or because he is poor ; because he is an employer—or because he is a worker. Christians who take pains to study " social questions " in the spirit of Christ will remember that He refused to be " a judge or divider," but was always ready to be a mediator or peace-maker.

It will take a lot of hard work on the part of Christians to get the confidence of both workers and employers ; but what a splendid thing we have to offer to the world in bringing to disputes the spirit of Christ—a shrewd, clear-sighted love !

4. The Church must co-operate—within the Body of Christ, and with all that is good and wholesome in the outside world.

We have seen how grievously " long division " has meant " subtraction." While we cannot yet see how the branches of

the Church can be altogether united, we do see with very great joy how more and more they are working together—especially in missionary work. When this fine spirit of unity is brought into play here in our own land, the Church will become a greater power for good than ever before.

Moreover, Christians must not stand aloof from any good piece of work just because it has been started outside the Church. It is surely the Church's business to back up every movement for improving the lot of citizens, making them happier and healthier, and their surroundings more beautiful, wherever the idea started. Quite a lot of people are worked upon by the spirit of God without being aware of it ! Christians will recognize such people, and will work with them in brotherhood.

This is, of course, already being done. We have seen what the Christian Church in China and India is doing. Ways of doing still more will be talked about at Hangchow.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

C. 1. "The Church ought to confine itself to spiritual matters."

"The Church ought to devote itself to helping the poor and oppressed."

Which of these two sayings do you think is right ? Or is there a certain amount of truth in each ?

2. Read I Corinthians, 13. Has this anything to do with C.1 (see p. 17) ?

3. How do you think the Conference at Hangchow will help the Church to carry out the suggestion in C.2 (see p. 17) ?

4. Are there any things in your neighbourhood which seem to you flatly contradictory to the Christian Faith ? Is it possible to be a Christian in your office, your workshop, your home ?

5. What do you think the Church ought to do about (*a*) unemployment ; (*b*) low wages ?

6. Do the different churches in your neighbourhood co-operate at all ?

   If so, in what way do they work together? What difficulties prevent closer co-operation ?

IV

WHAT CAN I DO ?

All this talk of world problems makes us ordinary folk feel very small and useless. What can *we* do about it all ? Hangchow is very far away, and we can never go there. We are not Bishops, Moderators, Professors, Secretaries of Missionary Societies or Leaders of the Churches—neither are we Prime Ministers, Foreign Ministers, Generals, Admirals or Dictators ; the great happenings of the world go swirling on, taking precious little notice of anything *we* do, and bobbing us helplessly up and down like bits of twig in a flooded river. At least, that is how some of us feel when we read the headlines in the papers !

It is not true, of course. Each one of us alone may not be terribly important ; but all of us together make up *The Church*, and the Church is the Body of Christ. We are the means by which Christ works in the world—His hands for healing and helping, His feet for service, His lips for proclaiming the Good Tidings. That thought puts a very different face on affairs.

Now, what we—I, you—are each asking ourselves is, what can *I* do ? How can *I* help ?

We will, for the sake of clearness, consider the matter under three headings.

A. We can study the Facts.
B. We can Pray.
C. We can Act.

(*a*) *Within the Church.*
(*b*) *In the World.*

A. Study.

The fact that you have this booklet in your hands shows that you have made a start. You want to know something of what the world-wide Church is doing, and you begin here. Already you know more than you did. What next ?

1. When you have read this pamphlet, and had some thorough discussions about it, you will find that some interesting questions have turned up. You will want to know more. On the inside of the cover you will find a list of books, from which you can choose one or two for further reading. A good plan is to divide yourselves into small groups of two or three, each study a different book or part of a book, and then meet together to share the ideas you have gained.

2. Take the missionary magazine of your Society, and read it carefully every month. Have a big map hung up in your club room, and mark on it the countries in which your Society works ; then, when you read an article, find the place on the map about which it was written. This will help you to get a good general idea of what your Society is doing. You might also mark the areas of other Societies in different colours.

3. Try to read a daily paper which gives real news, not just pictures and big headlines. Follow the foreign news, and try to relate it to what you know from missionary sources. This will be hard work at first, but after a while it becomes fascinating !

B. Prayer.

You may think this ought to have been put first. But it is difficult to pray for causes which we do not understand and know very little about. It often becomes just a repetition of names without meaning ! Of course we shall not wait until we have studied to begin our praying ; but as we go on learning we shall find our prayer growing richer and more full of sympathy.

1. Prayer is not a forlorn hope or a last resort. " We can only pray " is far too often said, meaning that there is really

no hope. Our very first response to a difficulty or an ordeal must be prayer (though not necessarily on our knees).

2. Prayer is a living force that can and does accomplish miracles. But we neglect it so sadly that our praying becomes feeble—and when we see no results we say that prayer is useless ! It is just as if a flabby-muscled man tried to cut down a tree, and because of his weakness and lack of skill complained that the axe was no good. Prayer must be *practised.*

3. We must also remember that the answers we should like to get to our prayers may not be the right ones. It is God who directs, and He may have plans which are quite different from what seems good to us. Or we may never know that our prayers for someone or some cause far away have been answered. Again, God does not force men and women into His way, and we must not wish to force them either. What we have to do is to place our love and sympathy in God's hands, for Him to use in the best way possible.

C. Action.

Ah, you say, that's better. Now we are getting down to it. But remember that *unless* we study and *unless* we pray, our action will be confused and blundering. Our thinking must be true, and our lives must be infused with God's Spirit, before we can be " up and doing " to any good purpose.

1. *Action in the Church.*

Before we think of starting anything new, let us see what opportunities ordinary Church life offers. Are we, each one, really pulling our weight in what our Church is already doing ?

Worship.—The Church exists for the glory of God. We all need this " glory " in daily life. We have thought over this matter of worship earlier in our studies, and at this point we only want to add this thought : Where two or three are gathered together, there is He, our Lord and Leader, Creator of the world and Redeemer of mankind, in the midst. This is true of faithful groups all over the world—in China, India and Africa—in Germany, Japan, Italy and Spain. In our corporate worship we are one with them and with Christ.

Church Activities.—Are we doing our part here, or are we just holding back and criticizing ?

Could we give more help in the Sunday school, either by turning up regularly at our own class, or by taking a class ourselves, or perhaps by being ready to relieve a hard-worked teacher now and then ? " Oh, Sunday school work, how dull ! " says someone. But think of this. In Germany and Italy, as we have seen, little children are being carefully trained for the service of their country. They are, as the Dictators know, the citizens of to-morrow. Very well ; these youngsters in our schools are the Church of to-morrow. They will have to carry on the work of the Kingdom. Isn't it worth a bit of hard work, training them ? How do you know that that grubby-kneed little boy or cheeky little girl hasn't got the makings of a great missionary ?

Could we not bring a friend into the church, or see that newcomers have a warm and hearty welcome ?

Then, there are Girls' and Boys' Brigades, Guides, Scouts, Rovers, Rangers and children's missionary organizations. Do we remember that our small company is part of a world-wide fellowship ?

And, especially, are we backing up our missionary secretary by attending the meetings and lectures he arranges ?

Lastly, what about our giving ? Perhaps you are sick of being asked for money, when there seems to be so little of it. But try keeping these two thoughts in your mind, when you are asked to part with those hard-earned pennies and sixpences.

First, a poor woman coming from the Temple at Jerusalem, and shyly dropping into the collecting box at the door two tiny coins—all she had to give ; and a glorious smile lighting up the face of the Master who watched her.

Second, a poor, ignorant, dark-skinned man pleading : " I come from a country three and a half days' journey from here, beyond the mountains. I have been sent by my tribe to beg for a teacher. We have heard there was a missionary here. We wish to be taught the praying." The missionary already has his hands full ; his Society *cannot afford* to send

out another helper. That is a true story from the mission-field.

The missionary societies depend on the churches, and the churches depend on *you*.

The Church and the World.—Someone has said that the Church can be either a shield or a spear. That is, it can be either something to cower under, a refuge from unpleasant things, or a thrusting out into the world, to bring God's rule to those who need it badly. What is it to us ?

Here are some " spear thrust " suggestions :

1. Hold a missionary exhibition, with plays, pictures, models and short lectures (your Society will help you with advice).
2. If you have the gift of speaking (you may have more than you think) hold some meetings, either indoors or out, invite your friends from the shop or office, and try explaining to them what the Church is doing. After all, if young Communists and Fascists are able to get up and talk at street corners, young Christians ought to be able to give reasons for the faith that is in them ! People are far more ready to listen than you would imagine—as long as you are good-tempered and sincere.
3. Undertake, as representatives of your church, some piece of service in your neighbourhood. From a very live, vigorous church a group of young people recently decided to see what they could do to help a church that had fallen on bad days. They gave their help and service freely, and brought new life into what seemed dying. This was a fine bit of practical work.

These activities might be undertaken jointly with churches of other denominations. This would be a practical way in which we could help on the cause of co-operation, which we saw in our discussion is so vital if the Church is to be really effective in the world.

2. *Action in the World.*

After all, we spend most of our lives, not in church activities, but in shops, offices, factories, or wherever we earn our living. Is there anything we can do *here* to forward the coming of the Kingdom ?

There is much that we can do.

1. *We Can Guard our Lips.*—We often hear around us idle, silly phrases that do more harm than is realized ; contemptuous terms for other nations that sound superior and conceited. " Jappos " — " Chinks " — " Dagos " — " Niggers " — to use words like that betrays the littleness or ignorance of the people who use them. Fancy saying " Jappos " of a nation that produced Kagawa ; " Chinks " of a people whose generalissimo, Chiang Kai-Shek, is perhaps as great a Christian statesman as any in the world ; " niggers " of fellow countrymen of Dr. Aggrey of W. Africa and Canon Apolo of Uganda ; you can think of other examples. Let us be very careful never to let such expressions escape our lips. Our friends who hear us speak with decent courtesy of other nations will be influenced, even if we never explain why we do it.

2. *We can be Constructive in Our Talk.*—One of the most dangerous mistakes that is being made just now is to think of other peoples as all of one kind. We picture *Germany*, *Italy*, *Japan*, etc. as one big person—just as they are drawn in cartoons. We forget, in thinking like this, the large number of fine people in other countries who are not noisy, but whose influence is deep and wide ; and the still larger number of ordinary puzzled folk like ourselves who would like to be friendly, but don't know how to set about it. Let us try to understand what is behind the loud talk that both alarms us and makes us angry ; and when talking to our friends, let us try to discuss other nations quietly, getting as near to the truth as we can, helping other people to be quiet and sensible also.

3. *We can Make Known what the Church is Really Doing All Over the World.*—People are always saying and writing silly, ignorant things about missionaries and their work. It is our

business to know and to tell *the truth*—even if it needs some courage. Really, people will respect us more if we stand up for what we believe—as long as we do it courteously and good-humouredly, and as long as we *know our facts* !

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

A. 1. Can you think of any ways, other than those mentioned, of learning the facts about the Church in other lands ?

2. " The Church is the Body of Christ." What responsibility does this throw on you and me ?

B. 1. Do you know of any instances of remarkable answers to prayer ?

2. Have you found a prayer answered in a way you did not recognize at the time, but, looking back, you can see was for the best ?

3. " God so loved the *World*." Does this mean everybody —even the war-makers, slave traders, sellers of drugs and so on ? Can you find any words or acts of Jesus on this question ?

4. If God loves all the world, what way would you expect Him to take with His rebellious children ?

C. 1. What do you know about Guides, Scouts, Brigades, and so on, in other lands ? Can you find out more ?

2. Can you think out some other ways in which you could make the influence of your church felt in your neighbourhood ?

3. It has been said that " the world is not so much short of good leaders as of good followers." Does this apply to us ?

V

FORWARD, YOUTH!

Aren't you sick of people who shake their heads and say, "Ah, young people nowadays don't care about serious things. They have no backbone. They only think of having a good time"? You feel like answering "It's not true. Just give us a chance, and you'll see how we will put our backs into some good cause. Only it must be a good cause!"

Let us take a look round, and see if we can prove to those poor miserable headshakers how wrong they are.

A. Youth Abroad.

In Germany, Italy, Russia—in Japan, India and China and many other countries too—it is the young people who are full of enthusiasm. They are giving their wholehearted allegiance to what seems to them a great ideal. Either they are Communists, trying to make social order where the poor shall have a decent chance in life, or they are following some great national leader, ready to serve him and die for him. They deny themselves, they train their bodies and (sometimes) their minds, they work hard. In many ways they are a fine lot.

But the trouble is that their leaders do not teach them the whole truth; they teach them that their own Nation, their own Race, their own ideas and feelings are the only ones that matter in the world; with them, as with others, it is "*My* country, right or wrong."

That is plainly no way to bring about a world fellowship, or anything, indeed, but a disastrous war.

B. Youth in Britain.

That young people in Britain are not such a slack careless lot as the pessimists think is proved by the fact that you and many other groups are studying this pamphlet, by the eager-

ness of youth to get to the bottom of what is wrong, and by what happened not long ago. The British Christian Council (in which a number of the churches join) put forward the following call to Youth to unite :

1. In witnessing to the Kingship of Christ over the whole world order.
2. In practising Christ's way of fellowship in order to surmount all barriers of class, race or nation.
3. In presenting to the world the reality of the Christian community.

The Council invited as many as could do so to come to a meeting at the Albert Hall in London. What was the result ?

Seven thousand young people, Anglicans, Presbyterians Baptists, Congregationalists, Methodists, Friends and others all came together and packed that great hall. Of course there were thousands more who would have liked to come, but couldn't. Besides representatives of the British churches, there were members of all the Continental churches in London, of the League of Coloured Peoples, the Indian Students' Union, the Chinese and Japanese Christian Movement—the strangers within our gates who share the vision of a world order under the Kingship of Christ.

No wonder the Bishop of Croydon, who was Chairman, said to them, " This meeting is unique—it is without precedent." And he added, " Whether it is historic depends upon you." He meant by that, that the real importance of the meeting depended on whether youth was prepared to keep on with the task—and *keep on keeping on* !

C. Are They Keeping On ?

Yes, indeed they are. This meeting was only part of a movement in which youth of all countries are preparing, under Christ, to take a hand.

Youth leaders are represented at the Oxford Conference this summer.

At Mysore, in India, young men from fifty countries came together this year under the Young Men's Christian Association.

Next year, the World's Young Women's Christian Association, and the World's Student Christian Federation will hold their conferences.

Youth leaders will have a great part to play at the Conference at Hangchow.

And, in 1939, there is to be a huge conference of all the Youth movements which can get together. About fifteen hundred young men and women from different organizations will be meeting in Switzerland to get to know each other, to worship and pray and discuss together how young people can shoulder their part of the work that shall bring in the Kingship of Christ.

Where do you come in ? Are you coming in ?

D. Artisans of Peace.

Basil Mathews in his book, *Shaping the Future,* tells of his joy at reading in a French translation of the New Testament the words " Blessed are the peacemakers," and finding " the peacemakers " translated thus : *les artisans de la paix.* The artisans of peace. The builders-up of peace, the working men and women. The new world order is to be built up " not by the great statesmen ; not by the architect sitting at his desk making blue prints, but by the plumber, the mortar mixer, the carpenter, the bricklayer, the mason." We are all in on this just what and where we are, and all the " ans " and " ists " must come together in their towns and villages for thought and action in a common task.

And no one has an easy job. " The Kingship of Christ over the whole world order." Easy words to say ; but what if we and all professing Christians were really to put them into practice ?

A group of young church leaders, thoroughly dissatisfied with the unchristian world order in which they found themselves, went apart for a few days to be with Christ and to think

and pray together. Here are some of the things they feel the Kingship of Christ involves for them :

> " Complete surrender of the personal life to our Lord Jesus Christ with a willingness to follow to their logical conclusions and at whatever cost to ourselves the demands which He makes."

Try it for a day—a week-day. What would it involve for you if you were an Italian, a German, a Russian or a Japanese ?

> " A belief in the supreme value in God's sight of human personality which leads us to pledge ourselves to a dedicated life of self-giving, and to pray and work for the removal of present social injustices."

If you had a young friend from Germany or Russia or Japan or India staying with you, would you like to take him for a visit to the distressed areas, say in South Wales, Durham or Scotland ? What would be your own feelings and his about the reality of a Christian Community here in Great Britain ?

Perhaps you who read this live in one of these areas and are unemployed ? Well, Youth is on the march to save you from this and to bring you into the fellowship.

> " The practice of a thorough-going fellowship which surmounts all barriers of class, nationality or race."

In Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but all are one. What then about racial discrimination in the world to-day, the colour bar, fear and preparations for war, " satisfied and dissatisfied nations," raw materials and colonies, " economic nationalism," national sovereignty and all the rest of it ?

> " For these principles we are prepared to live, and if need be, to suffer, and we believe it to be our vocation so to present Christ to the men and women of our generation that they are drawn to Him and so into the fellowship of His Body the Church."
>
> " To a generation full of fear and uncertainty and knowing not whither to look, we proclaim God as seen in

Jesus Christ. Because of what we have seen in Him our hearts, far from being full of uncertainty and fear, cry rather that :

> " Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
> But to be young was very Heaven."

Youth coming from East and West takes a hand under the Kingship of Christ, somewhat bewildered at the task, not seeing perhaps more than the outline of the plan, but ready for action. Are we prepared to do the thinking which will ensure right action ?

God is the Architect

There is an Architect and He knows the plan. His artisans need close touch with Him if they are to build aright. Nor are we alone in carrying out His plan. Christians in every country, of our own day and past days, take their share in it. We are surrounded by a company of witnesses and workers whom distance of space and time prevent us from seeing.

The simple rule with which " The Fellowship Way " of the Youth Committee of the British Christian Council closes will help us :

> " We will seek daily the fellowship of the Holy Spirit for a life of friendship with all our fellow-men."

It is this daily touch which gives us vision and confidence in our witness. " That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us : and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ."

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1 This Freedom.—

" Liberty is a precious thing—so precious that it has to be rationed."—Reported saying of Lenin.

" The glorious liberty of the Sons of God," said St Paul. What sort of freedom does Christ wish you to have under

His rule, so that you may express yourself in His service? What restrictions does the Kingship of Christ impose upon you?

2. "It is surely nothing but a good thing that in 1937 there are so many young people in this country who are clear that whatever they don't believe they do believe that they have in the eradication of war and poverty a tremendous call to duty."

   What do you regard as the main causes of these two evils (*a*) War; (*b*) Poverty? Suggest what you feel to be necessary for their removal.

3. "We will endeavour to understand the religious, economic and political aims and aspirations of our own and other nations and refrain from hasty judgments."

   What are you personally, and the group to which you belong, doing to carry this out?

4. What are you doing in your daily life to enable God to use you as one of His "artisans"?

5. Are the "ans" and the "ists" coming together in your district? If not, what is your church group doing about it? What lines do you suggest for united thought and action?

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